

REMARKS

Claims 1-6, 9-17, 19-21, and 23-31 remain pending. Independent Claims 1 and 20 are similar.

Claim 1 reads as follows:

1. A gaming method wherein an array of symbols is displayed and an award is granted based on the displayed array of symbols, the method comprising:

displaying on a first display screen of a gaming machine, in a first game, a first array of randomly selected symbols, the first array including at least one special symbol in a first position in the first array;

displaying on a second display screen of the gaming machine, in a second game, a second array of randomly selected symbols;

shifting a position of the at least one special symbol in the first array to a second position in the second array on the second display screen, wherein the shifted special symbol is combinable with symbols in the second array to form winning combinations of symbols; and

granting any award to the player for the second game based upon the symbols displayed in the second game including the at least one special symbol.

Although the examiner has compared a pre-November 13, 2007 version of Claims 1 and 20 with the prior art, the present version of Claim 1 will be compared to the prior art, and the examiner's arguments will be addressed.

In the present Office Action, the examiner rejected at least independent Claims 1 and 20 as being obvious over Visocnik (US 2004/0048646) in view of Barrie (US 5,980,384) and Rodgers (US 7,090,580). Barrie is newly cited.

Visocnik discloses a moving wild symbol (e.g., a mouse) that moves around the same screen for each game in a free game session. On page 3, the examiner agrees that Visocnik does not disclose displaying one game on one screen and another game on a different screen, or shifting the position of a symbol from one screen to another screen. Applicant admits that it is prior art to display a reel-type main game on one screen and a different type of bonus game on another screen.

Rodgers discloses a slot machine with an upper and lower display (Fig. 1B), where the top screen can be used to display any information, including a bonus game (col. 10, lines 23-30). The game Rodgers plays is irrelevant to Applicant's Claims 1 and 20 since Rodgers holds reels that display a wild card and respins reels that do not display a wild card. Rodgers is only relevant for showing a slot machine cabinet with two display screens.

Barrie discloses two games being simultaneously played on the same display screen, where, after each round of the first game, some symbols in the first game are transferred into the second game. (Col. 14, lines 47-67; and col. 2, lines 1-2.) Barrie's first game and second game **must be** physically integrated. Barrie states in col. 2, lines 24-26, "Some game symbols that appear in the physically integrated secondary game depend on game symbols that appear in the primary game after a spin or play." The first game involves the large fruit symbols on the three reels in Fig. 1 (col. 4, lines 13-16). The physically integrated secondary game involves the small symbols 126 at the edges of each reel in Fig. 1 (col. 4, lines 43-52). The secondary symbols 126 automatically change to match the game symbols appearing in the adjacent primary game positions (col. 4, lines 53-60). As seen, it is a required aspect of Barrie's game that the secondary game is played on the same screen as the primary game.

Even when Visocnik, Rogers, and Barrie are combined, there is still no suggestion for Applicant's game of Claims 1 and 20.

There is no suggestion for shifting Visocnik's moving mouse between different screens displaying separate arrays of randomly selected symbols, despite Rodgers showing a slot machine cabinet with two display screens. In Applicant's invention, the two display screens concurrently display two similar but separate games, and the "special symbol" from

the displayed first game is shifted to another position on another screen concurrently displaying a similar second game. This enables game possibilities that are not available with a Visconik type game where the first game must be extinguished before the second game can be seen. Applicant's game also gives the player a better visual understanding of the effect of the shifting special symbol compared to a single screen game. Applicant's game is not equivalent to a single screen game and is not an obvious design choice.

It is respectfully submitted that the examiner is using hindsight in modifying Visconik's game to separately display Visconik's two consecutive games on two different screens and then presumably alternately move the wild mouse between the two screens for successive games. In Visconik's game, shown in Fig. 7, Visconik believes it is important for the mouse 24 to be visible as an overlay on the screen while the reels are rotating for the next game. Modifying Visconik's game as suggested by the examiner would go against Visconik's teachings and not be a logical game, and there is no support for such a modification. Rodgers' simply showing that a slot machine can have two screens programmed to display any information does not suggest the modification to Visconik's game.

Typically, a second screen in a slot machine either displays a static display (to advertise the game), a bonus game, or some other "feature" game that is independent of a different game (typically the main game) played on the first screen once the main game initiates the game on the second screen. In Applicant's Claims 1 and 20, the games being played on the first and second screens are games where arrays of symbols are randomly selected, and the games interact by a symbol on one screen being shifted into the game played on the other screen. The player can see the two games at the same time. This creates many new game possibilities and is respectfully submitted to be non-obvious. In the thousands of video slot machine games on the market, Applicant's have yet to see such a game where two similar symbol array games interact by symbols shifting between screens.

Accordingly, all claims are respectfully submitted to be allowable.

If the examiner has any questions or would like further clarification of the claims, the examiner is requested to call Applicant's attorney at 408-382-0480 x202.

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/Brian D Ogonowsky/
Attorney for Applicant(s)

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Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,

/Brian D Ogonowsky/

Brian D. Ogonowsky
Attorney for Applicant(s)
Reg. No. 31,988

Patent Law Group LLP
2635 N. First St.
Suite 223
San Jose, CA 95134
Tel (408) 382-0480 x202
Fax (408) 382-0481